

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

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Item III (c) of the Provisional
Agenda

GENDER STATISTICS AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Prepared by the Steering Group on Gender Statistics

In May 2020, the Steering Group on Gender Statistics started to explore the development of a set of questions to add to household surveys to measure the differentiated impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and men. The Bureau discussed and supported the proposal in October 2020.

This note describes the work by the Steering Group in this direction. Its addendum 1 contains "Guidance on measuring the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and men" which proposes indicators and survey questions.

The Bureau supported the proposal that countries review and test the proposed indicators and survey questions and incorporate them into regular statistical data collection.

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Covid-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted women's income and economic security, unpaid care work burdens, health care access, mental health, sexual and reproductive health, and led to an increase in violence against women. Women make up a large proportion of the care and service workforce on the front lines of the immediate crisis response. They have also been doubly burdened with childcare and unpaid domestic work, and have faced higher burdens of unpaid care work in the household due to the closure of school and childcare facilities. The likelihood that a gender-specific digital divide has further exacerbated these impacts is a related concern. The lack of a strong gender-sensitive evidence base and methodological guidance on how best to capture the gender-specific impact of Covid-19 impedes a determination of the gravity of the situation, and the ability to intervene and respond with pre-emptive and corrective strategies.

2. The social and economic impacts of Covid-19 are likely to continue beyond the duration of the pandemic itself. As a result, the renewed demand for gender statistics will persist after the immediate monitoring needs of the pandemic are met. To provide practical guidance to countries and support the collection of internationally comparable data for the region, the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Steering Group on Gender Statistics proposed to develop a set of questions for use in recurring household surveys that capture the immediate effects of the pandemic and provide comparable data over time on its longer-lasting consequences.

3. In October 2020, the CES Bureau supported the proposal by the Steering Group on Gender Statistics to develop a set of questions data producers might add to household surveys,

such as general household surveys or labour force surveys, to measure the differentiated impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and men (ECE/CES/BUR/2020/OCT/11). The objective of the minimum question set is to support gender mainstreaming in the regular production of official statistics in the region, focusing not only on the immediate effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, but also on providing comparable data over time on the medium and long-term consequences of Covid-19.

II. COUNTRY QUESTIONNAIRE

4. The Steering Group launched the work on developing the minimum set of questions in September 2020 with a survey of NSOs to gather information on challenges they have experienced related to the production of gender statistics as a result of the pandemic. Twenty-nine countries responded to the survey, which included questions on demand for gender statistics related to the Covid-19 pandemic, modifications to data collection methodologies to meet these demands, and the topics and population groups covered in surveys conducted during the early pandemic period.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF INDICATORS AND SURVEY QUESTIONS

5. The survey findings on national experiences in collecting and disseminating new data to assess the impact of Covid-19 served as the basis for the selection of the four topics on which to develop indicators and survey questions:

- a. Work: paid work, unpaid work and volunteering;
- b. Health: general health, mental health, and sexual and reproductive health;
- c. Violence against women: prevalence and access to support services;
- d. Digital gender divide: access to ICT, access to health and Covid-19 information, digital skills and ICT for work, digital skills and ICT for study and training, digital skills and ICT for communication and social networking, and e-commerce.

6. Chapters on each of these four topics follow a common template developed by the Steering Group and include the following elements:

- a. Overview of the topic and sub-topics;
- b. Proposed indicators with suggested levels of disaggregation;
- c. Proposed survey questions with recommended parent surveys, data collection frequency, and target population;
- d. Methodological notes and caveats;
- e. Policy relevance.

7. The Steering Group members with substantive expertise in the topics led the development of the content for each chapter. All steering group members reviewed drafts and provided comments that shaped the outcome – *Guidance on measuring the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and men*. It is expected that the Steering Group will update the Guidance based on countries' experience in implementing it.

8. The work was supported financially from the United Nations Development Account project "Data and statistics" (10th tranche) and the UN Women Europe and Central Asia

regional office through UN Women's flagship programme initiative "Making Every Woman and Girl Count".

9. The *Guidance on measuring the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and men* is provided in addendum 1 to the present note (ECE/CES/BUR/2021/OCT/6/Add.1).

IV. PROPOSAL FOR FOLLOW-UP

10. The Steering Group proposes that countries participating in the work of CES review and test the proposed indicators and survey questions, and incorporate them into regular statistical data collection.

V. REQUEST TO THE BUREAU

11. The Bureau is invited to provide comments on the guidance and support the proposal that countries review and test the proposed indicators and survey questions, and incorporate them into regular statistical data collection.

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